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ABSTRACT

Since 1991, the Austin Independent School District (AISD) (Texas) has asked former students about their public school experiences and present activities. The Former Student Survey helps the district determine its effectiveness in meeting its objective that all students who exit the Austin schools will be able to perform successfully in their subsequent endeavors. High school graduates of the classes of 1990 through 1993 were asked what they were doing, which courses were most useful, and how prepared they felt for their current activities. Samples consisted of a random selection from each class, representing about 20 to 35% of each class, and ranging from a low of 2,768 from the class of 1992 to 2,947 from the class of 1990. About one half to three fourths of former students attended schools of higher learning, and about one third to two thirds were employed full- or part-time. About one third were in school full-time and working part-time. Relatively few (5% or less) entered the armed services. English was the course most often selected as the most useful course, with mathematics selected as the second most useful. Most students (69 to 75%) in all graduating classes strongly agreed or agreed that they were adequately prepared for their present activities. (Contains five figures and three references.) (SLD)

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FEEDBACK

ED 393 920

FORMER STUDENT SURVEY: Four Years of Graduates

Results from Surveys of AISD Students

BACKGROUND

Since 1991, AISD has asked former students about their public school experience and present activities. The Former Student Survey was administered to determine the District's effectiveness in accomplishing its fourth strategic objective: *"After exiting AISD, all individuals will be able to perform successfully at their next endeavor."*

High school graduates of the classes of 1990, 1991, 1992, and 1993 were asked questions in three main areas:

- ✔ *What are you doing now?*
- ✔ *What high school courses were the most useful?*
- ✔ *How prepared are you for your present activities?*

MAJOR LONGITUDINAL FINDINGS

- Following graduation, approximately one half to three fourths of former students attend schools of higher learning.
- Approximately one third to two thirds of graduates are employed full or part time following graduation.
- Following graduation, approximately one third of all graduates are in school full time and working part time.
- Relatively few AISD graduates (5% or less) enter the armed services after high school graduation.
- English was the course most frequently selected by students as *the most useful course in high school*; mathematics was selected as the *second most useful*.
- Most students (69%-75%) in all graduating classes *strongly agreed or agreed that they were adequately prepared for their present activities.*

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THE SAMPLES

Each class of students was surveyed 12 to 18 months following graduation, beginning with the Class of 1990. The samples consisted of a random selection of students from each graduating class, ranging from 20%-35% of the total group (see Figure 1). To assure the representativeness of the responses, samples were stratified on grade point average (GPA). Students with GPAs of < 2.5 were oversampled to increase the likelihood of their responding. Students were mailed the questionnaires, and stamped, self-addressed envelopes were furnished for return by mail.

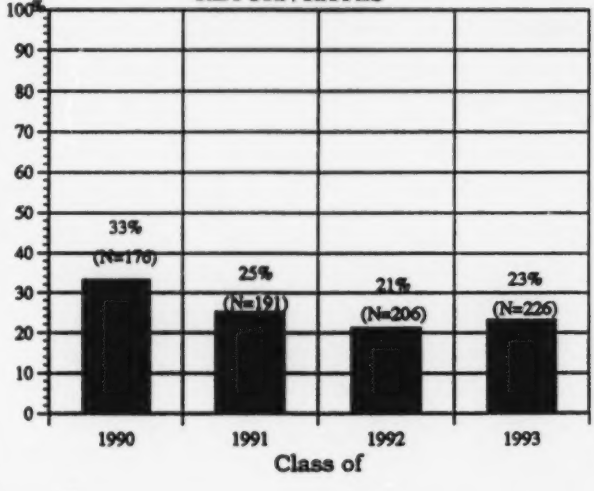
FIGURE 1
FORMER STUDENT SURVEY
STUDENT POPULATION AND SAMPLE FOR EACH YEAR, 1990-1993

Class of	POPULATION						SAMPLE					
	N	Male	Female	African American	Hispanic	Other	N	Male	Female	African American	Hispanic	Other
1990	2,947	46%	54%	19%	25%	56%	532 (20%)	46%	54%	20%	23%	57%
1991	2,810	47%	53%	19%	26%	55%	770 (27%)	52%	48%	20%	27%	53%
1992	2,768	47%	53%	20%	25%	55%	984 (36%)	46%	54%	20%	26%	54%
1993	2,797	50%	50%	17%	26%	57%	979 (35%)	52%	48%	17%	27%	56%

RETURN RATES

Over four years, the return rate ranged from 21%-33%. For the first three years of the survey, the return rate consistently declined, but it improved in the fourth year. However, because larger samples were used in the later surveys, the actual number of respondents increased (see Figure 2). Mailed surveys of any type typically have a low return rate; in addition, because of the mobility of the population studied, the return rate of this survey is affected by the difficulty in contacting many of the former students.

FIGURE 2
RETURN RATES

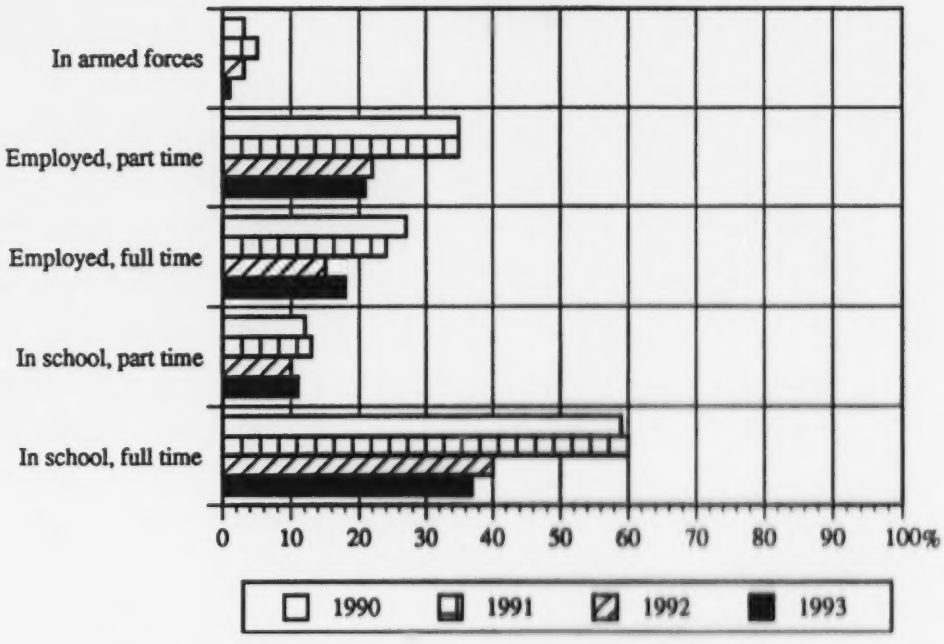


SURVEY RESULTS

What are you doing now? (See Figure 3.)

- Since 1990 graduates were surveyed, the number of former students in school full or part time has declined steadily, from a high of 71% (1990 graduates) to a low of 48% (1993 graduates).
- The rate of former students in school full time declined dramatically from 60% (1991 graduates) to 37% (1993 graduates), whereas the rate of former students in school part time remained relatively stable, between 10%-13%.
- Of those students who attended college following graduation, most (53%-66%) attended a four-year college or university and 30%-38% atttended a community/junior college.
- The percentage of former students employed full or part time peaked at 59% for 1991 graduates, but remained at a stable rate of approximately 39% for the other graduates.
- Graduates from all classes surveyed were more likely to be employed part time than full time.
- Of those students employed full or part time, the most frequently reported types of jobs included sales, office work, food service, and computer-related work.
- The percentage of former students in the armed forces peaked at 5% for 1991 graduates.

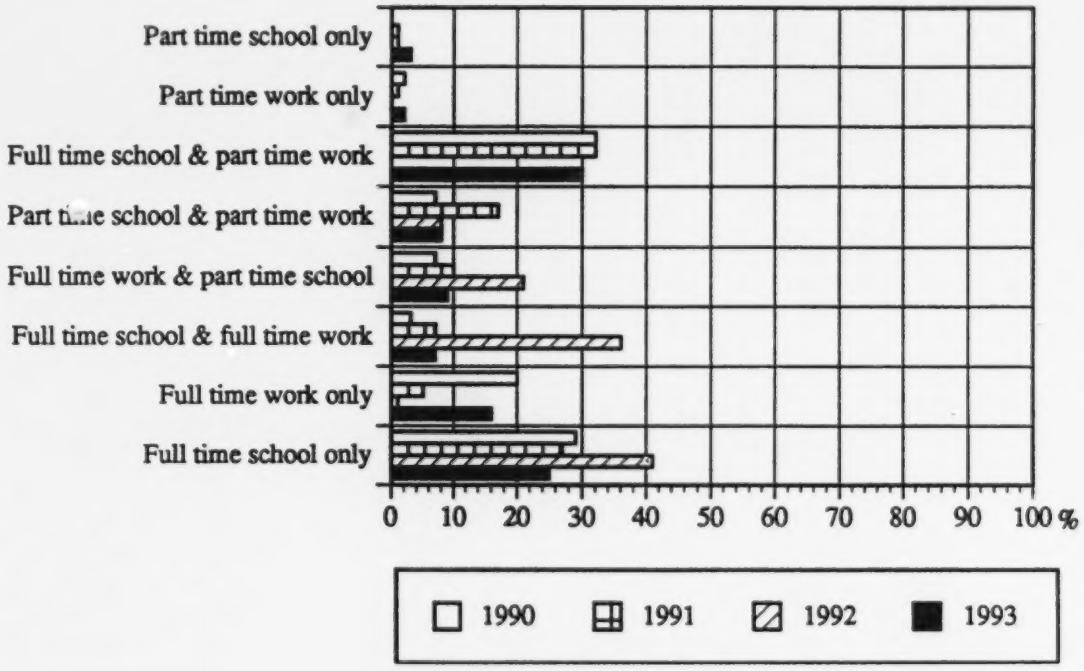
FIGURE 3
"WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW?" *

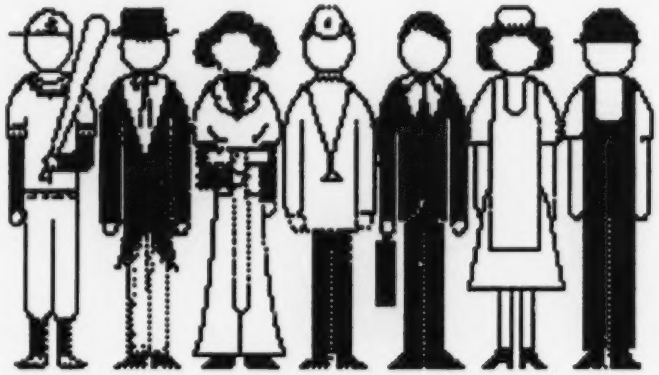


* Graduates were asked to choose all that applied.

*WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW?**

WORK & SCHOOL


Part time school only
Part time work only
Full time school & part time work
Part time school & part time work
Full time work & part time school
Full time school & full time work
Full time work only
Full time school only
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 %
1990
1991
1992
1993

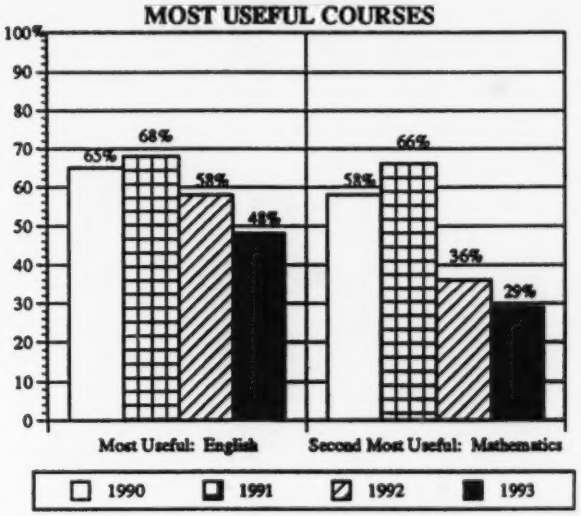


* Graduates were asked to choose all that applied.

What high school courses were the most useful?
(See Figure 4.)

- English was the course most frequently selected by students as *the most useful course in high school.*
- Mathematics was the course most frequently selected by students as *the second most useful course in high school.*
- The students' evaluation of English and mathematics as the most useful and second most useful courses in high school has declined.

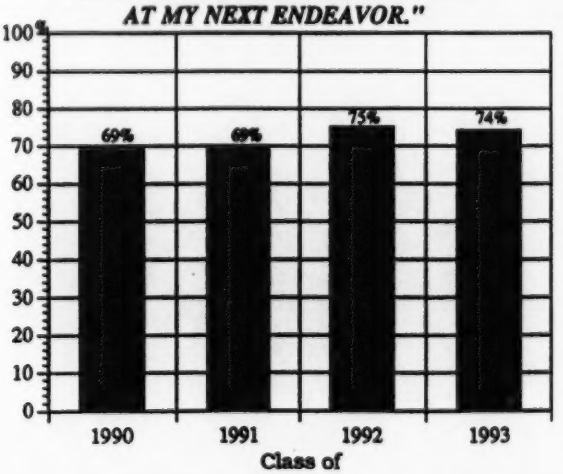
FIGURE 4
MOST USEFUL COURSES



How prepared are you for your present activities?

- Most students in all graduating classes *strongly agreed or agreed that they were able to perform successfully at their next endeavor* (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 5
"AFTER EXITING AISD, I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PERFORM SUCCESSFULLY AT MY NEXT ENDEAVOR."



NEW QUESTIONS

Former students from the Class of 1993 were asked several questions about their present activities which other graduates had not been asked.

- Most 1993 graduates (52%) reported that they live separately from their parents in a house, apartment, dorm, or group home.
- About two thirds (64%) of 1993 graduates responded that they were not involved in any clubs or organizations in their communities.

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